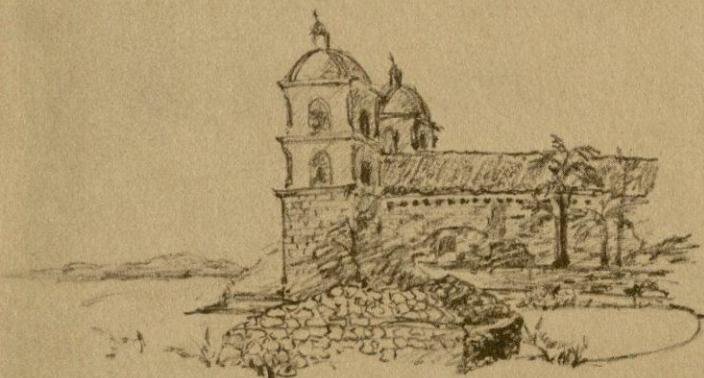


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# A GUIDE TO OLD SANTA BARBARA THE SPANISH & MEXICAN PERIODS



By Barbara Schneidau  
With Illustrations by Jacqueline Broughton

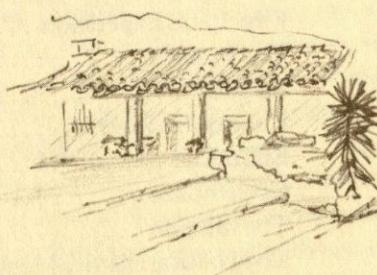
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# A GUIDE TO OLD SANTA BARBARA



We would like to express our thanks to the staff and docents of the Santa Barbara Historical Society Museum and to the many other people who aided us in this project.

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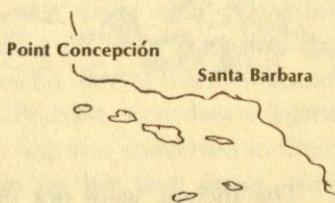
The Beginnings



Standing on the beach is a good way to start a historical tour of Santa Barbara. Looking out to sea on a clear day, one can see the mountainous Channel Islands. Some of those islands were once part of a mountain chain or spine projecting from the mainland at Point Concepción, which is also visible on a clear day. The islands seem to have been one of the first inhabited areas of the New World, having very primitive cultures as long ago as 10,000 years, some say as long as 60,000 years. Probably settlement began while there was still a land route out to the islands.

For that matter, if you came in to the Santa Barbara Airport, perhaps you noticed a stump of a hill to your southeast, formerly known as Mescalitán Island. That island was a real metropolitan area in Indian times. As many as five villages were grouped around the slough that surrounded this once impressive island (bulldozed to make fill for the airport). The creeks in the area fed into the slough, providing it with sufficient fresh water. Also, as an island, Mescalitán was naturally protected.

The Indian population was quite large in October 1542 when Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a Portuguese who was sailing under the Spanish flag, plied up the coast of California and entered the Santa Barbara Channel, claiming all that he saw for the Spanish crown. The Indians, those living on the islands, as well as those living along the coast, then numbered perhaps up to 15,000, as dense an aboriginal population as any in North America. They had never seen white men before; being excited by the sight of Cabrillo's ships, they rowed out to greet them in their own plank boats, sealed with asphaltum (the same tar that seeps onto some



beaches today and is so difficult to remove from your shoes, feet, or bathing suit). This was the only place where plank boats were made by Indians on the Pacific Coast either in North or South America: probably the nearness of the offshore islands, plus the oozing tar for sealer, served as a spur to invention. A town a few miles east of Santa Barbara is named Carpinteria (Spanish for "carpenter shop"), referring to this boat-building skill. A replica of one of these boats can now be seen in the County Courthouse.

Cabrillo had not come to settle, however, and went on to explore as far as San Francisco. But when those first Spanish ships left to go back to Mexico, they went without their leader. He was injured in a fall at a time when his ship was again in the Santa Barbara area, and he died soon after. It is generally thought, but has never been proven, that he was buried on San Miguel Island, the Santa Barbara Channel Island farthest to the west, about thirty-three miles out to sea; but he might have been buried on the mainland, near Goleta. We think it's very fitting that the wide boulevard running along the beach is named after Cabrillo, the first white man who came and stayed. The boulevard on Sundays has the added attraction of an outdoor art show, "Domingo." Individual artists and crafts people bring their works to be seen, and bought, by the tourists and residents who meander along this picturesque thoroughfare.



*Indian Dwelling*

The Indians were not disturbed by another visit from white men for sixty years. Meanwhile they continued their quiet and easy life, not even needing agriculture; they ate mostly fish and shellfish and a meal made from the acorns of the Coast Live Oak that they gathered just outside their grass, beehive-shaped huts.

The topography made the living reasonably easy four hundred years ago, just as it does today. The coastline faces south (when you are looking out to the ocean you are looking toward the South Pole, not Hawaii), giving the city a pleasant exposure, and it is further protected from the elements by the Channel Islands. The Indians often went naked, a tradition still followed on some Santa Barbara beaches, to the delight of some and the consternation of other visitors and residents. Another sheltering influence is the Santa Ynez Mountain chain which rings Santa Barbara on the northern side right behind the city; these mountains lie east-west, not north-south, which, if you think about it, is very unusual in the Americas. These mountains keep Santa Barbara's climate under the tempering effects of "marine influence," whereas on the other side of them it gets both hotter and colder.



Saint Barbara

Sebastian Viscaino, in 1602, was the next white man to sail into the channel. His ship was lying off the coast on Saint Barbara's day, December 4, and Friar Antonio de la Ascension, one of the men accompanying Viscaino, gave her name to the area. Barbara, according to legend, had lived in the third century in Asia Minor. She was converted to Christianity, denounced to the pagan authorities by her own father, tried, convicted, and condemned to die. Her father slew her with his own hand! The deed done, he was struck by lightning. She has become, among other things, the protector against lightning, so you probably won't have to worry about being struck by lightning while you're in her city, Santa Barbara.

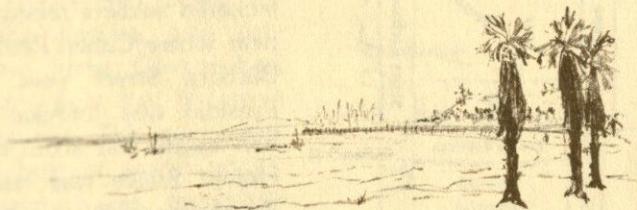
Vizcaino was one of the six captains sent by Spain to look for safe harbors along the California coast. These were needed badly by this time, Spain had established a trade route between San Luis in Mexico and the Philippine Islands, one that lasted for two hundred and fifty years in spite of some problems, and while it was relatively easy for these treasure ships, called "Manila Galleons," to get to the Philippine Islands, the prevailing winds and currents made getting back to Mexico a difficult task indeed. The ships had to go far to the north, just past San Francisco, then come down the coast of California. Harbors were necessary so that the ships could put in for fresh water and supplies after the long trip.

But no settlement was established here, and Santa Barbara remained almost untouched by civilization. Not until 1789 did a land expedition head up the California coast, and then only because of an order, or because the settlers wanted to come. The King of Spain, Carlos III, was afraid that either the Russians or the English, both of whom were active in the area, might try to claim California and perhaps even threaten the well-established settlement in Mexico. To prevent this occurrence, the King decided to set up outposts along the coast of California. Gaspar de Portola led the first land expedition up the coast, which went through the Santa Barbara area in August of 1789 and camped at Arroyo Burro, near the site of the present beach off Cliff Drive at Las Positas Road. The Indians were extremely friendly, in fact overly friendly, regarding the party as late into the night with their raucous music that the company finally was forced to break camp and move on in order to get some rest. The hospitality of the Indians turned out to be invaluable to the first settlers, the Indians, also, was not returned.



Santa Barbara Mountains

Something must be said here of the three-fold Spanish approach to California. The church was to start the mission system, the laymen were to found pueblos (cities), of which Los Angeles was one, and the military was to protect against Indian uprisings or invasion from outside. The military established three Presidios (forts) in California: at San Diego, San Francisco, and Monterey; but this left a gap between San Diego and Monterey. So an additional Presidio was built at Santa Barbara. It was the last such military outpost to be built for the Spanish Empire. Imagine little Santa Barbara once having been the military protection for massive Los Angeles!

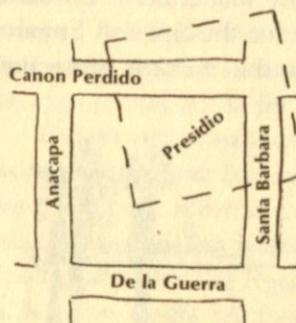


Santa Barbara Coastline

Soldiers were needed to man the proposed Presidio and recruitment began in Mexico. These first colonizers of Santa Barbara were picked for their survival skills. Assignment to Alta California, as it was then called, was not a prize ardently sought by the soldiers, for it was like being sent to the end of the world. One inducement was that recruits were allowed to bring their families with them. In April 1781, one of the largest overland expeditions began, Exodus-style, with women, children, and animals packing with them all the goods they would have in their new homes. They came by the trail from Sonora, Mexico, which had been tracked by the explorer Juan Bautista De Anza, fording rivers, crossing mountains, and suffering the many hardships of the desert. Their horses were stolen along the way. After months of travel, they wintered at the San Gabriel Mission near what is now Pasadena. The expedition was composed of three sub-groups; one was to stay to form the pueblo of Los Angeles, the second was to found the mission at Buenaventura, and the third to establish (El) Presidio Real (Royal) at Santa Barbara.

With the return of good weather the ongoing settlers continued their journey as far as the present location of Ventura, and founded the mission there in March 1782. In spite of the hardships of the arduous trip, the group arrived with one more person than they had when they left: births had outnumbered deaths by one!

The women and children stayed in Ventura while the soldiers continued on the last leg of the journey, led by Felipe de Neve, governor of Alta California, and Fray Junipero Serra, famous "first citizen" of California.



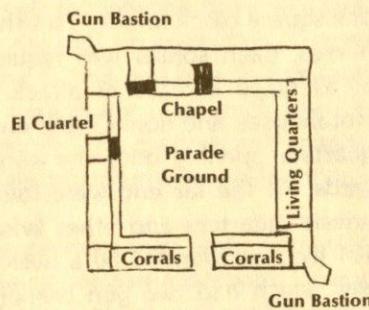
On Sunday, April 21, 1782, the leather-jacketed soldiers raised a wooden cross near where Canon Perdido meets Santa Barbara Street now, and the Royal Presidio was founded. Santa Barbara had begun just about the time that the United States was emerging from the Revolutionary War against Britain: a good omen for future American development.

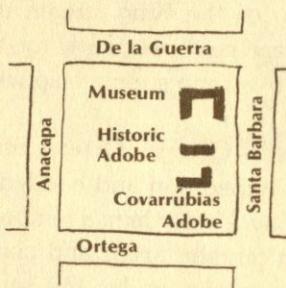
It is hard for modern Americans to picture the trip and subsequent life of these first "Californios." After walking hundreds of miles over rugged terrain from Mexico, far to the southeast, on through Yuma and a waterless trail in what is now the Imperial Valley (a trail so harsh it was known as the Devil's Road), they would reach their goal several months after starting. We can go back and forth to the moon much faster than they could travel from Mexico to Santa Barbara. When they arrived they could not rest and relax in lovely hotels or motels. Their homes had to be built first, and they had to learn from the Indians how to live off the land until crops could be grown. They existed on a slow starvation diet of 1200 calories a day — but this was no "fat farm!" Truly a far cry from the Santa Barbara of today, which boasts the largest number of restaurants per capita in the United States. And the settlers were so isolated that in all of Alta California, the five hundred or so miles from San Francisco down to San Diego, there were only 146 soldiers! From early on their only communication with the outside world was by sea, the main land route having been cut off by an Indian uprising and massacre at Yuma.

The soldiers' duties were to protect against Indians and foreign invasion. They were also expected to explore the interior country, catch horse thieves, care for the animals and fields of the King, create their own food supplies and carry the mail. They were paid irregularly for this, so there was little money for buying anything from the supply ship which came only once a year!

The first *comandante* was José Francisco Ortega; Ortega Street is named after him. He had been on Portolá's expedition and had led the scouting party that discovered San Francisco Bay. Under him, a temporary structure of *tules* (a grass-like plant found in marshy areas and used in weaving) was built. The permanent fort was begun under the second *comandante*, Goycochea. Given the difficulties in the spelling and pronunciation of the name Goycochea, I'm sure no one regrets that no street was named after him. This permanent fort was to be built of adobe bricks. Its primary purpose was protection against the Indians, and yet it was those very Indians who helped to build it! The fort never did figure in much fighting. There was one Indian uprising; it started at the Santa Inéz Mission in 1824 and spread to Santa Barbara.

Another skirmish in 1830 during the Mexican period, not involving Indians, was less serious: many of the combatants were related to each other and had no real desire to shoot a cousin or uncle. An American, Dr. Anderson, wrote to a friend describing the battle this way: "You would have laughed had you been there . . . the two parties were within sight of each other for nearly two days, and exchanged shots, but at such a distance that there was no chance of my assistance being needed." There was one casualty, however: a horse. There was often a comic-opera aspect to life in the Presidios. Once, at one of the northern California forts, the *comandante*, who wished to fire a welcome salute to an incoming ship, had to be rowed out to this same ship in order to borrow the gunpowder needed for the salute.





like. It was a real frontier fort, built around a parade ground approximately one square block in size. To either side of the entrance were corrals for the horses. Each soldier was required to have six horses, with one saddled at all times in case of attack. Immediately behind these corrals were storehouses and some living quarters. Along both sides were other living quarters opening onto the parade ground, each having individual back yards. At the far end were the chapel, the *comandante's* quarters, the priests' quarters and other living areas. The entire complex was 440 by 404 feet, surrounded by a twelve-foot-high, three-foot-wide outer defense wall which had two gun bastions, one at the northwest corner and the other at the southeast. These would have been in the parking lot near the corner of Anacapa and Canon Perdido Streets and near the Adult Education Center on Santa Barbara Street respectively.



In the Presidio the *comandante's* word was law. He had full civil and criminal jurisdiction for his area, and soldiers were not even allowed to marry without permission. This comprehensive authority was important, for although it was a military complex, the Presidio was much more than just that. It was a self-contained living unit, a real town, home, church, and state all rolled into one. As a matter of fact, it was all there was!

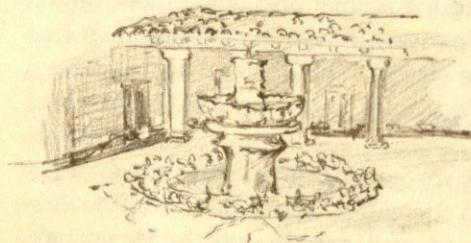
Santa Barbara  
Historical Society Museum



While you are still in the Museum, look around this quiet, peaceful structure, built in 1965 of adobe brick in the style of an old California rancho home. If you have a group, you can call ahead to request one of its excellent docents to give you a tour; or you can join one of the regularly scheduled public tours, or you can look through on your own. Glance down as you are walking around to see the animal and human foot (and hand) prints in the floor tiles. The tiles were made in a small town in Mexico and were laid out to dry in the streets. The children and animals left their marks in the same way celebrities leave theirs in front of Grauman's Chinese Theater in Los Angeles.

As the soldiers retired from military service, they were permitted to build homes in the area; thus began the city of Santa Barbara. Private homes were rare during the Spanish period, so it was not until the Mexicans took over in 1822 that Santa Barbara had its first building boom. Behind the Museum are two old adobes which face each other across a patio, occasionally opened to the public. The one nearest the Museum is called the Historic Adobe, so named because that's all anyone seems to know about it — it's historic! It is now the headquarters of the Rancheros Visitadores, a group of men who tear themselves away from big-time politics and finance once a year to ride through the back country. In the early rancho days, men would get together in the spring to separate and brand cattle, everyone helping everyone else. A fiesta at the end was not uncommon. In the late 1920's a group of men decided to revive the traditional ride on horseback and became the "Visiting Ranchers." Some claim that their Historic Adobe dates back to 1836. It is now standing on its third site, having been moved brick by brick in 1922 to its present location. Its roof has original Mission tiles on it.

Across the patio is the Covarrubias Adobe, which was built in 1817. Note the Indian "river of life" design on the doors. The same design is on the Museum doors. It was built by Domingo Carrillo (Carrillo Street is named after the family: do not confuse it with Cabrillo Street, along the beach, nor with Castillo). One of the Carrillo daughters married José Covarrubias and it is from him that the adobe takes its name. Domingo Carrillo's wife was a sister of Governor Pío Pico, the last Mexican governor of California, and they were both related to the *bandido* Solomón Pico, the "Zorro" of movie and TV fame. He was a highwayman who particularly detested "gringos." After robbing them, he would cut off their ears to make a necklace to show his girl friends — I don't know what were the ladies' reactions. The saddle of this ferocious character is in the Western room of the Museum.



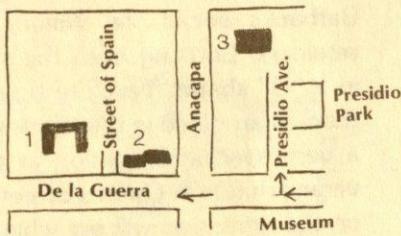
Covarrubias Adobe

Courtyards such as the one behind the Museum and the one in front of the Covarrubias Adobe were the real "living rooms" of the times. The adobes were dark inside even on a bright day; there was no glass for the windows, only rawhide; the floors were mud made harder and more compact by adding steers' blood. The earliest adobes did not even have chimneys, and furnishings were very sparse, so it was only natural that most of the time was spent outside. It was in the patio that the cooking and other household chores were regularly done; it was there that the children played and the women gossiped. You will have noticed that there is no grass outside the Museum or in its patio. This is to reproduce the conditions of the early homes: patios with lawns and gardens were unknown. Plants, if any, would have been in pots. Such fountains as are found in the Museum's and Covarrubias Adobe's patios would have been rare. There was a water problem then as now: some things just never change.

Returning to the corner of De la Guerra and Santa Barbara Streets, looking across De la Guerra: if you stand with your back to the entrance of the Historical Society Museum, you will be looking toward the site where the Royal Presidio once stood. The front left corner of the Presidio was in what is now Presidio Park, a delightful little spot that can be entered by Presidio Avenue, the oldest street in Santa Barbara. It ran along the side of the Presidio up to the Mission. It only goes half a block now, ending at the Post Office, an interesting building in itself since special permission was obtained from the United States government to build the Post Office in the "Pueblo Viejo" style rather than in government drab, as everywhere else in the U.S. But the building on Presidio Avenue with a plaque saying "Guardhouse" was not part of the Presidio. It dates from approximately 1840 and was used by soldiers in the Mexican period.

Continue west on De la Guerra Street, crossing Anacapa, to the Oreña Adobes, 27-29 E. De la Guerra, which now house antiques. Dating from the 1850's, they are an excellent example of a California Don's home. The structure on the east was originally a storehouse for the De la Guerras, used to display merchandise brought in by ship. A door was cut through to connect the two adobes. When

Anacapa Street was built, the end of the building was cut off. Aside from this, the adobes are much as they were in the 1850's. The Oreña family had a rare possession for the time, a piano. One day, to their utter amazement, a complete stranger walked in, sat down to play, continued to play until he had satisfied the urge, got up and left. The family, known for its hospitality, never asked for an explanation.



- 1 Casa de la Guerra
- 2 Oreña Adobes
- 3 Post Office



Oreña Adobes

Just west from the Oreña Adobes past the "Street of Spain," which is one of the entrances to the El Paseo shopping complex, is the Casa de la Guerra. This home of Don José de la Guerra, now nos. 15-19 on the street named after him, was begun in 1819: a brick in the wall bears the date of completion, 1826. Family members were in residence until the 1920's. In its day, it was the grandest house in town, the center of Santa Barbara's social life. Ninety people were employed as servants and retainers. Looking from the sidewalk you will see that the house is built in a "U" shape: Tecolote Bookstore is in the front of the right wing and there is an office in the left front wing. The house even had glass windows, a very special distinction at that time. Walk up the front steps to the verandah (De la Guerra Street will be at your back) and look at the window on the right; you will see where the De la Guerra girls etched their initials into the glass with their diamond rings.



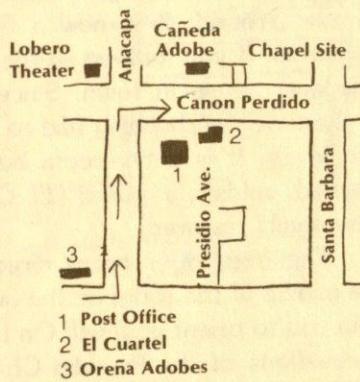
Casa de la Guerra

Don José de la Guerra was twice *comandante* of the Presidio. His great influence in Santa Barbara spanned three periods of Santa Barbara history — Spanish, Mexican and American. The Spanish period, which lasted until 1822, was a time of autocratic rule. The *comandante* was the ultimate local power, responsible to the governor who in turn answered to the King of Spain. It was a time of total isolation, for Spain allowed her colonies to trade only with Spanish ships, but as mentioned before the supply ship came to Santa Barbara only once a year. And then only if the conditions were right. The soldiers were ill-paid, ill-clothed and poorly fed; in fact the Indians probably had a higher standard of living. Smuggling began as a means of eking out a better life.

When Mexico revolted against Spanish rule in 1822 she took California along with her. The *Barbareños* did not seem to have any trouble switching loyalty to the Mexican flag. Trade restrictions were eased, lessening the smuggling problem, and a real civil government developed. Land grants to citizens, which had been very rare during the Spanish period, increased. The military fort became more of a *pueblo*, or town, and the Mexican flag flew calmly over Santa Barbara until the United States took possession in 1847.

But before we get too far in history, let's go back to the Presidio. Return to Anacapa Street, turn left and go one block north to Canon Perdido Street. In the 1840's, when the Americans had taken over Santa Barbara, a cannon from a wrecked ship lay abandoned on the beach. It then mysteriously disappeared. Although it was useless as a weapon, the American officer in charge became nervous and demanded its return. When he did not get his cannon, the citizens as a whole were fined five hundred dollars. Canon Perdido is named for the "lost cannon" and another street is named "Quinientos," which means "Five Hundred."

On the corner of Anacapa and Canon Perdido is the Lobero Theater, founded in 1873 by José Lobero. This is not the original building, which



was replaced in 1924. The dedication of this new building was the occasion for the first official Fiesta in Santa Barbara. Now our Fiesta takes place in August during the full moon. It opens on the steps of the Old Mission and then spreads all over the city with parades, horses, costumes, dancing, singing, Mexican food (and cotton candy) all for the sheer fun of it!



*El Cuartel*

Go on Canon Perdido Street toward Santa Barbara Street, about one-third of the way down the block; behind the Post Office is the adobe *El Cuartel*, part of the original Presidio. On its side wall, facing the sidewalk, you will see its name. Through the entrance on the right you will find a reception desk. Or you can enter through the gate on the left. Entering through the gate leads you into what was part of the Presidio Parade Ground. It is now a State Park, probably the smallest one in California. If you look up at the roof, you will notice that it is the oldest split-level house in town. Since there was no earth-leveling equipment at the time, the building had to follow the contour of the land; therefore two levels. It is a two-room building and was the living quarters for a married soldier, a guard (*El Cuartel* means "barracks"). It has been extensively restored.

The front door opens directly into the larger of the two rooms. In the middle of the room on the table is a model of the Presidio which might help you to orient yourself. On the wall can be seen pictures taken at the excavations of the Presidio Chapel site which is across Canon Perdido Street. A picture on the back wall will give you some idea of what *El Cuartel* looked like before it was restored.

The door to the right leads one step up into another room. In it you can see some of the things which would have been part of the belongings of a soldier (they are replicas, not originals). All of his possessions would

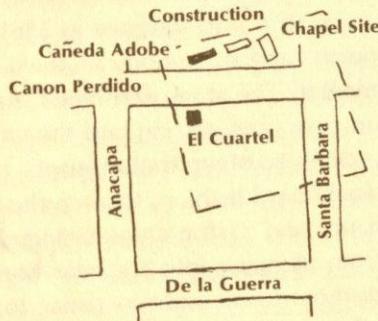
have been kept in a small trunk like the one next to the wall. Models of the shield and spear used by the soldiers were made by Santa Barbara High School students. The Spanish soldiers did not wear armor in the New World, but adapted the leather jacket and shield from the Aztec Indians. These were made of several layers of animal skin which had been wetted and dried: treated in this manner, they were strong enough to repel arrows and even the bullets of the day if not fired from too close range. Hence the "leather-jacketed" soldiers, *soldados de cuera*.

The soldier's first bed was a mat on the floor, and then a cot made from a wooden frame with rawhide stretched across it. During the Spanish and Mexican periods, beautiful bedding became a status symbol for the ladies. Lovely hand-made embroidered sheets could be seen on these crude cots.

Across Canon Perdido Street, next to the parking lot and behind a hedge is the Cañeda Adobe, greatly reworked and not open to the public. It, too, is part of the original Presidio. This adobe and El Cuartel are the two oldest state buildings still standing in California.

To the right of the Cañeda Adobe, work is beginning at this time on the reconstruction of the Padres' Quarters. Next to this is the chapel site where can be found real archaeological "digs." These sites are all owned by the State and managed by the Trust for Historic Preservation. It is hoped that the chapel too will one day be rebuilt. Comandante Goycochea in 1786 sent blueprints for the Presidio to Monterey, which at the time was California's capital, for approval. These blueprints are being used today to find the foundation stones which are the only parts of the Presidio left, except for the Cañeda Adobe and El Cuartel.

The Presidio's adobe bricks were damaged by earthquakes, particularly in 1812, and it was used less and less. The roof was not kept in repair. When the rains came the adobe mud bricks gradually returned to plain old mud. The deterioration was hastened by people taking bricks to build



private homes outside the Presidio walls, so that by 1860 the Presidio was in ruins. It was no longer needed as a fort, and as the soldiers retired and built homes in the area it was no longer needed as a home; civil government developed so it was not required as a seat of government; and as churches were built in the new town it was no longer needed as a religious center. Its time had passed.



Stagecoach

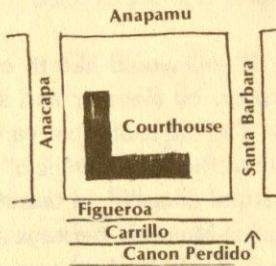
It is hard for us today to be able to visualize just how remote and isolated the tiny population of California was. And Santa Barbara was isolated even for California. The mountains come down to the sea on either side, so that there was no easily accessible land route. The first stagecoach came to Santa Barbara in 1861. It was a "down" stage, coming from the north, and everybody in town, all twelve hundred of them, came out to meet it. The stage continued running daily for twenty years. It did not have an easy time getting into the city: en route it came over San Marcos Pass, a climb so steep that, in spots, horizontal ruts had to be dug into the road, washboard fashion, to keep the stage from rolling back as the horses pulled it up; and as the stage descended these ruts helped to prevent the stage from plunging into the rear horses. Passengers were sometimes asked to dismount and walk in order to lighten the load. The stage wheels wore other ruts in the rock which, curiously enough, are the same width as those of the old Roman chariots. The ruts are still visible today, but most are on private property. One of the stage stops, Cold Spring Tavern, just over the Pass on Stagecoach Road off Highway 154, still exists as a restaurant. Another route, via Gaviota Pass, is used by Highway 101 today. Then, it was just wide enough for a stage to pass. When the rains came, it was impassable. (But it was used as a sheep-driving pass: in the heyday of sheep ranching it was the central valley's outlet to the coast.)

Going south was not much easier. When the stage reached Rincón Point (you pass this Point on Highway 101 coming up from Los Angeles), it had to wait for low tide and then plunge into the ocean, hoping not to be flipped over by a combination of rocks, sand and waves. The trip to Los Angeles took 30 hours! A through train did not come to Santa Barbara until 1901.

Continue north up Santa Barbara Street to the wonderful County Courthouse. Regularly scheduled public tours are given by docents. Fortunately, this handsome building was conceived in the 1920's just when Santa Barbarans were beginning to take an active interest in the city's Spanish-Mexican traditions. It was to be a part of the "Santa Barbara Style." The architect was William Mooser from San Francisco. His plans took two years to bring to completion; the Courthouse was finished in 1929. Enter from

Anacapa Street and walk through the Anacapa arch which frames some beautiful trees in the garden and the mountains behind, and carries the proud motto, "God Gave us the Country, the Skill of Man Hath Built the Town," *DIOS NOS DIO LOS CAMPOS, EL ARTE HUMANA EDIFICIO CIUDADES*. The arch leads to the sunken garden which was the site of the original Courthouse. In August, during Fiesta Week, free entertainment is held here in the evenings. And the people come, both tourists and residents, with blankets to sit on, to enjoy in this wonderful setting performances that are reminiscent of Santa Barbara's past.

Then walk in the door from the archway that leads into the side of the building with the clock tower. Wander around inside this building just letting your eyes enjoy themselves. Look everywhere, but please do it quietly because this is still a working Courthouse and trials may be in progress. The public is permitted at trials. You can check the board near the Figueroa Street and Anacapa Street entrance to see what is going on. Be sure to go to the second floor to see the splendid Mural Room. There you will find portrayals of the beginnings of Santa Barbara done by Dan Sayre Groesbeck.





*Santa Barbara County Courthouse*

If you would like to continue up to the seventy-foot clock tower, El Mirador, by elevator and stair, you will have a fine bird's-eye view of the city. The tile roofs that can be seen from this height and the architectural style of the "Pueblo Viejo" (Old Town) are the result, strangely enough, of a natural disaster. In the 1920's there was an awakening of interest in the Spanish-Mexican heritage and the preservation of its fine old adobes. But mostly Santa Barbara was a nondescript Western town. Then in 1925 came a big earthquake which destroyed much of the downtown area. This catastrophe was turned into the opportunity to rebuild the city in the style associated with it today. This Santa Barbara Style consists of a variety of architectural traits found in places with like climates, such as Mexico and the Mediterranean. The buildings usually are low with light-colored stucco or adobe walls and red tile roofs; tile is often used in decoration. El Pueblo Viejo, approximately a seventy-two square block area, was set aside to be governed by strict building codes demanding conformity to the Santa Barbara Style.

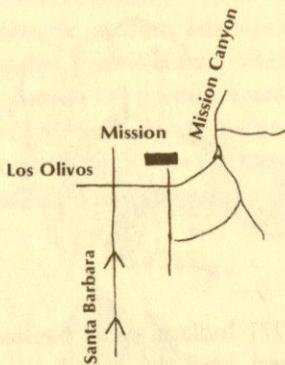
Many of the lovely street trees that you look down on from the tower are imports, brought in from all over the world. Even the palm trees are immigrants; the Washington Fan Palm is the only one native to California. The eucalyptus came from Australia originally to be used for firewood, later as wind breaks.

Now go downstairs all the way toward the Santa Barbara Street side of the building, which used to be the County Jail but is now only used for prisoners awaiting trial, where you can see a stagecoach. Stagecoaches did not make stops every few blocks as buses do. As a matter of fact, the horses were trained so that once in harness and on flat ground they were to run without stopping, except of course at stagecoach stops where they were unharnessed. This created a problem at some places, such as Foxen's ranch,

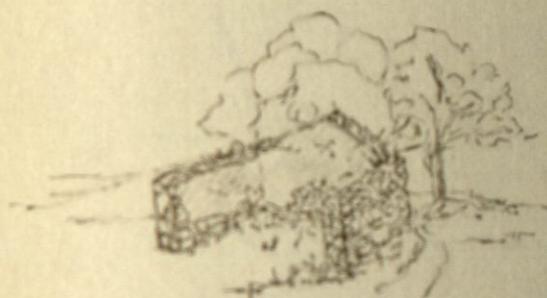
when mail had to be delivered. Foxen's ranch was on flat land and therefore it was against the horses' training to stop, yet Foxen was postmaster for the area and had to receive mail from and give mail to the stage driver. The problem was solved by having the stagecoach driver, without stopping the horses, throw the mail pouch down to Foxen. While the horses galloped in a circle about two hundred yards around, Foxen quickly sorted through the mail, removed all pieces to be delivered in the area, added any outgoing mail, and finished in time to throw the mail pouch back to the driver as the horses completed their circle.

Continue up Santa Barbara Street and go right on Los Olivos to the Old Mission, one of the most photographed buildings in the United States. Fray Junipero Serra, father of the California Missions, wanted a mission started in Santa Barbara at the time when the Presidio was founded. But the governor of Alta California, Felipe de Neve, fearing an Indian uprising — the Indians near Yuma had massacred the Spaniards at the mission there — refused permission to begin a mission here before the Presidio was well enough established to offer adequate protection. The Santa Barbara Presidio had some twenty-odd soldiers and was responsible for the safety of approximately one quarter of California. Its jurisdiction spread from La Purísima Mission at the Santa Maria River in the north to Mission San Fernando in the south. "Adequate" protection is a relative thing! Furious though he was, Father Serra could not change the governor's decision, and the Santa Barbara Mission was not begun until 1786, four years after the founding of the Presidio and two years after Serra's death. The Presidio and the Mission grew together to become Santa Barbara. Though separated today by the intervening city, they were within sight of each other in the early days.

The Mission at Santa Barbara was the tenth established in what would become a chain of twenty-one in California. It is the only one in the chain that has been continually in the hands of the Franciscans, who had come to California to christianize the Indians. The original plan was to convert the Indians to Catholicism and also to teach them the customs and skills of



Western civilization. The intention was to do this in ten years and then, when the Indians presumably were adept in the ways of modern life, to return to them their freedom and their lands. It did not work out that way: between diseases and "civilization," the white man managed to accomplish near-genocide. This was not due to any particular Spanish cruelty, just the clash of ways of life. Comparatively little Chumash Indian blood is left in residents of the area. A short melancholy street on the East Side is called Indio Muerto, "dead Indian." It's an inappropriate tribute.

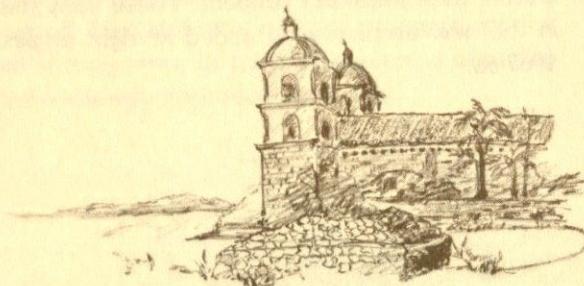


Mission Ruin

4,771 Indians were baptized by the Santa Barbara Mission between 1786 and 1858. Its jurisdiction at first included all of present-day Santa Barbara County including the islands. It was responsible for a smaller area once La Purisima Mission (1787) and Mission Santa Inéz (1804) were established. The Indians who lived at the Mission had a very different life from those who worked at the Presidio. The latter lived in their villages, as before, coming to the Presidio to work or trade. The Indians who joined the Mission were not forced to do so, but if they were converted and entered the Mission life, they then came totally under the control of the padres, no longer free to come and go as they wished. They studied, worked, lived, worshipped at the Mission and were obliged to accept its lifestyle permanently although they were allowed occasional visits to their villages. Only criminal matters were outside the padres' jurisdiction, left to the comandante. The Indians' casual life of few clothes and little work was completely changed. They learned to till the soil, build permanent structures, master the trades and arts of Western life. The unmarried girls were even locked in their dormitory at night. The birth rate fell below the death rate; obviously they lost their zest for life when their traditional existence was so drastically changed.

The Chumash Indians had been the most culturally advanced of those who came under Spanish rule in California. They were of such a lively temperament that the Spaniards were concerned about controlling them. But there was only one Indian uprising, in 1824, which began in Santa Inés after the brutal flogging of an Indian by a soldier. It spread to the Santa Barbara Mission. The Indians sent their women and children into the mountains for safety while the men stayed to fight against Comandante De la Guerra's soldiers. Soon realizing that the contest was no even match, they took advantage of a time when the soldiers were resting to head for the hills. Since they were necessary to the economic system soldiers were sent to try to bring them back, unsuccessfully. Padre Ripoll, who had persuaded Governor Arguello to grant the Indians a full pardon, went with another military contingent. The Padre was able, because of the pardon, to induce them to return. But Governor Arguello did not honor the promised pardon. He allowed some of the Indians to be killed and some imprisoned.

#### *Mission Santa Barbara*



The Mission consisted of many more buildings than are left today. It, like the Presidio, was a self-contained living unit. At first the Indians lived in grass huts such as they had always had, and then in small one-room adobes built to house them. The Indian village was located west of the Mission and extended almost as far as Santa Barbara Street. By 1807, 252 houses had been built. They were laid out in an orderly fashion, side by side along straight streets. The village had its own orchard and garden. The entire complex was surrounded by an eight and a half-foot adobe wall.

For a nominal fee, it is possible to take a self-guided tour of the remaining buildings of the Santa Barbara Mission. The first permanent buildings were of adobe bricks. Good wood for the beams was scarce in the area and one

sometimes had to go far afield to find suitable trees, hauling them the long way back. There's a story told that the padres would bless the logs and tell the Indians that they could not put these sacred logs down again until they had been carried back to the Mission! In 1793 the first church was completed; it was enlarged in 1811 and destroyed by the 1812 earthquake. The present stone church which was probably designed by Fray Ripoll was built between 1815 and 1820. The style of the church was influenced by Vitruvius' work **The Six Books of Architecture** which appeared in Rome in 27 B.C. A Spanish translation of the book can still be found in the Mission library. The church's Graeco-Roman façade, copied from Vitruvius' book, is flanked by two Spanish Mission towers. The three statues on top of the façade are Faith, Hope and Charity, and are similar to an arrangement of the main altar of the church of San Francisco in Palma, Majorca, where Ripoll studied for the priesthood. The statue in the niche represents Saint Barbara. In 1833 all the documents pertaining to the California missions were transferred from Mission San José to the Santa Barbara Mission by Padre Narciso Durán, then Mission President. These early mission records are still here, in the new archive wing added at right angles to the front colonnade in 1967-68.



Mission Cemetery

If you go through the Mission you will see the front rooms which were the padres' quarters; there were usually two per mission. The tour continues through the inner courtyard into the church and out into the cemetery, where the huge tree you see is a Moreton Bay Fig. Look back over the door through which you left the church and you will see three skulls and crossbones. The two on either side are embedded in the wall. The one in the middle is carved in stone. There were just under four thousand Indians buried in this small cemetery between 1789 and 1854.

Room for new burials was made by digging up graves and placing the bones in the charnel house which is located at the northeast corner of the cemetery. The last fullblooded Chumash Indian, Ignacio Aquino Tomás, died in 1952. He was buried in the Mission cemetery.

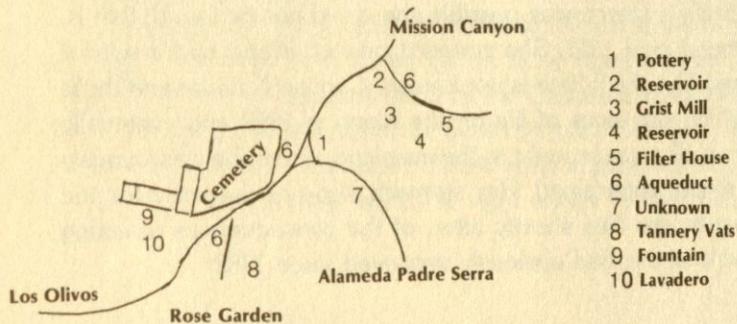
As you leave the cemetery there is a plaque to the right of the door commemorating the "Lost Woman of San Nicolás Island." In 1836 the padres decided to remove the Indians from the Channel Islands, "for their own safety." A ship was despatched to bring them to the mainland on a day when the weather at San Nicolás Island was very heavy. At the last moment, one woman noticed that her child was not with her, and jumped ashore to search for him. The ship waited for her until the wind and waves forced it away. The bad weather continued for days, preventing a return to the island. When finally a search was possible she could not be found; that is, she was not found until 1853. She survived on that island by herself for seventeen years! The child's fate is not known. Captain Nidever and those accompanying him saw signs of life on the island in 1853 and eventually found the woman. She was brought to the mainland where she was joyously received and royally entertained. Her stomach was not prepared for the good life, however; she died shortly after, of the consequences of eating rich foods. The local diet had obviously improved since 1782.



*View from the Mission*

Leaving the cemetery, you notice by the street a viaduct which was part of the water system built by the Indians for the Mission. It brought water down from Mission Canyon, and is part of an elaborate water system of which many ruins can still be seen in the park across the street. In front of the Mission are the fountain and *lavadero* (laundry basin) dating from 1808. The water went into the fountain from the reservoir and then into the *lavadero* where the Indian women washed clothes by wetting them and then scrubbing them on the slanted sides.

Across Mission Canyon Road and Alameda Padre Serra are many of the ruins, including the lower reservoir built in 1806 which is still used by the city. Above the reservoir is a mill and then another reservoir. Water flowed from the top reservoir to the mill, then into the lower reservoir, then to the fountain and *lavadero* and on to the orchards and garden. Near Mountain Drive some more of the aqueduct still survives, and a filter house which purified some of the water for drinking and sent it via another aqueduct to fountains in the Mission. Back across Alameda Padre Serra, near the street, there is one small ruin whose function is unknown. Toward Mission Canyon Road is what is left of the tannery vats, and more of the aqueduct. At the other end of the park is the city's beautiful rose garden.



From this area in front of the Mission, where one used to be able to see the Presidio, it is still possible to look out to sea (one is tempted to compliment the padres on their choice of real estate). Often one sees ships passing in the channel; it was in ships that Santa Barbara received what little she did from the outside world. California's main commodities for trade were hide and tallow. The American colonies needed leather for shoes and did not want to trade with England, so many American ships came here. At first there was smuggling, since Spain did not allow her possessions to trade with other countries no matter how great their needs might have been. When the Mexicans took possession of California more trade was allowed; however, ships were required to register with the government in Monterey so that their cargoes could be taxed. This tax was, at times, greater than the value of the cargo. Consequently, captains would make a stop at one of the offshore islands, unload part of the cargo, go to Monterey to register for taxation, return for the hidden cargo and then begin trading. Tax evasion is not new!

The importers soon learned that they should send nothing dull to California. Silk ribbons were the largest selling item. In return the Californios traded their animal hides. Santa Barbara's first brick buildings were constructed with bricks that had traveled as ballast in these trading ships from the east coast of the United States.

Just north of the Old Mission up Mission Canyon Road follow the signs to the Natural History Museum if you would like to see fine exhibits on the Indians of the area. This is a charming museum nestled among the oak trees. Behind the Museum you will find a replica of one of the huts made of *tules* in which the Indians lived.



#### Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

There's one more place to seek the beginnings of Santa Barbara: in the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden (open without charge every day 8 a.m. to sunset). Just follow Mission Canyon Road to Foothill Road, turn right one block, and then left, and continue up Mission Canyon. The Garden specializes in native California plants. It covers about sixty-five acres and has over five miles of trails. In the natural setting of the canyon you will see the native trees of the county, Coast Live Oak, Bigleaf Maple, White Alder, California Bay, Black Cottonwood and Western Sycamore. If you are lucky enough to be in the Botanic Garden in the spring following a good rainy season you may be treated to a fine display of native California wildflowers.

In the Redwood section you will be able to see the Old Mission Dam, built in 1806 by the Indians to supply water, via aqueducts, to the Mission. But one can go back even further in time, with a good imagination and the help of a pamphlet "Guide to the History Trail" sold at the Information Office, to see how the Indians lived before the arrival of the Spanish. This

pamphlet points out wild plants used by the Indians for food (remember that they did not cultivate any), for medicinal purposes and for weaving. It also gives some information on the early Spanish uses of plants and gives notes on some early botanists and explorers.

There are parts of the Botanic Garden, especially along the creek, that are maintained in a relatively natural state where you can see some of the vegetation of Santa Barbara as it might have been many years ago. There is also a section devoted to the native plants of the Channel Islands. It is even possible in some spots to see the ocean and islands beyond, where it all began.



Santa Barbara Botanic Garden

ELI LURIA LIBRARY, SBCC



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